

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An object model for capturing information related to product innovation-related data, comprising:

a product idea interface for capturing an idea for a product in a product idea object; and

a design alternative interface for capturing a plurality of design alternatives for said product in a plurality of respective design alternative objects.

2. An object model in accordance with claim 1, comprising:

a product requirement interface for capturing a requirement for said product idea in a product requirement object.

3. An object model in accordance with claim 2, comprising:

a product function interface for capturing a function for fulfilling said product requirement in a product function object.

4. An object model in accordance with claim 3, comprising:

a product fulfillment interface which captures how well said product function fulfills said product requirement.

5. An object model in accordance with claim 1, comprising:

a design representation interface for capturing a representation of said design alternative in a design representation object.

6. An object model in accordance with claim 1, comprising:

a decision interface for capturing a decision in a product requirement object, said decision relating to one of said product idea or said design alternative.

7. An object model in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

each of said product idea object and said design alternative objects are stored in a tool-neutral persistent form.

8. An object model in accordance with claim 2, comprising:  
each of said product idea object, said design alternative objects, and  
said product requirement objects are stored in a tool-neutral persistent form.

5           9. An object model in accordance with claim 5, comprising:  
each of said product idea object, said design alternative objects, and  
said design representation objects are stored in a tool-neutral persistent  
form.

10           10. A method for capturing information related to product innovation-  
related data, comprising:  
capturing an idea for a product in a product idea object; and  
capturing a plurality of design alternatives for said product in a  
plurality of respective design alternative objects.

15           11. A method in accordance with claim 10, comprising:  
capturing a requirement for said product idea in a product requirement  
object.

20           12. A method in accordance with claim 11, comprising:  
capturing a function for fulfilling said product requirement in a product  
function object.

25           13. A method in accordance with claim 10, comprising:  
capturing a representation of said design alternative in a design  
representation object.

30           14. A method in accordance with claim 10, comprising:  
capturing a decision in a decision object, said decision relating to one  
of said product idea or said design alternative.

          15. A method in accordance with claim 1, comprising:  
storing each of said product idea object and said design alternative  
objects in a tool-neutral persistent form.

16. A method in accordance with claim 11, comprising:  
storing each of said product idea object, said design alternative  
objects, and said product requirement objects in a tool-neutral persistent  
form.

17. A method in accordance with claim 13, comprising:  
storing each of said product idea object, said design alternative  
objects, and said design representation objects in a tool-neutral persistent  
form.

18. A computer readable storage medium tangibly embodying  
program instructions implementing a method for capturing information  
related to product innovation-related data, the method comprising the steps  
of:

capturing an idea for a product in a product idea object; and  
capturing a plurality of design alternatives for said product in a  
plurality of respective design alternative objects.

19. The computer readable storage medium of claim 18, the method  
comprising:

storing each of storing each of said product idea object and said  
design alternative object in a tool-neutral persistent form.

20. The computer readable storage medium of claim 18, the method  
comprising:

capturing a requirement for said product idea in a product requirement  
object;

capturing a representation of said design alternative in a design  
representation object; and

storing each of said product idea object, said design alternative  
object, said product requirement object, and said design representation  
object in a separate relational database, wherein associations between each  
of said product idea object, said design alternative object, said product

requirement object, and said design representation object are captured using foreign keys.

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